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# Middle age strikes back

It's Auntie Mame forever

By Eugenia Sheppard

NEW YORK — Emily Pollifax is like thousands of American women who are pushing 50 or slightly over. She has raised her children, lost her husband, and is living in complete security in an affluent suburb.

She has just had a complete physical checkup and been pronounced perfect by her doctor, who adds, "Now is the time for you to do whatever you've always wanted to do."

Mrs. Pollifax has to think back beyond the committees, the card games, and the dinners. What she finally comes up with is, "You know, I've always longed to be a spy."

## No joke to Roz Russell

THE DOCTOR LAUGHS it off, but it's no joke to Mrs. Pollifax, the heroine Roz Russell will play in her next film, United Artists' "The Unexpected Mrs. Pollifax." Jimmy Galanos, who designs her personal wardrobe, is already sketching the seven or eight costumes she'll need. The shooting will start early in August in Mexico and, later, in Yugoslavia.

When she said yes to the part, Roz Russell was expressing a little of her resentment over the universal, hullabaloo over youth. "They can't have the whole cake," she said last week at the Waldorf Towers. "The rest of us are entitled to a few bites, too."

Mrs. Pollifax applies to the CIA to become a spy, but finds that official spying isn't all that easy. She does manage, though, to get herself involved in one of the hottest cold wars imaginable.

"The story is just a middle aged woman doing her thing," Roz Russell says. "It's a wonderful inspiration for any woman who, God forbid, today, is over 35." Tom Morrow who did the original Auntie Mame poster has already finished some gag drawings of Mrs. Pollifax. Roz Russell is thinking of playing her as he has painted her, in a white wig.

She hasn't looked forward to any part as much since she went into Auntie Mame. "It's hard physical work," she says. "I have to climb a mountain. I almost drown and once I escape by crawling through a herd of goats."

That last crawl will probably be the end of the layered Galanos costume, topcoat over suit over shirt and skirt, in which Mrs. Pollifax starts her big adventure. The Galanos costumes will have their innings at the start of the movie, when she's still a bridge-playing, socialite committee member.

Here for a week with her husband, Freddy Brisson, who is busy filming "Generation" in Central Park and making final arrangements for his "Coco" musical, Roz Russell has nothing but Galanos clothes in her closet, half a dozen daytime things, four short and two long evening dresses. Her favorite is the short white lace with cellophone braid around the hem and long sleeves, worn over nothing but a body stocking. For Elsie Woodward's cocktail party at El Morocco, where the indestructible Brissons were top celebrities, she wore a white silk shirt dress with a scarf neckline under its own white-lined, bright blue coat. Her woolen dresses may seem heavy, but she likes them that way. They never need pressing.

MUCH AS SHE already likes Emily Pollifax, Roz Russell knows she will never erase her image as Auntie Mame.

"Auntie Mame I will never lose. I tried playing other parts, but I guess it's Mame forever."

Actually she is Auntie Mame. She was playing the part long before Patrick Dennis wrote the book for and about her. Now he's at work on "Paradise," all about Acapulco, in which she'll play the part of an innkeeper when it becomes a play or a movie.

Almost everything Auntie Mame says could have come right out of Roz Russell's head, and some of it probably did. Her favorite line, which drives her constantly is, "Life is a banquet and most of the poor s.o.b.'s are starving to death."



Roz Russell